

Congressional Gold Medal Presented to Apollo 11 Astronauts and First American to Orbit the Earth

November 16, 2011

WASHINGTON – The New Frontier Congressional Gold Medal was presented today to astronauts John Herschel Glenn, Jr.; Neil A. Armstrong; Edwin E. “Buzz” Aldrin, Jr.; and Michael Collins during a ceremony in the Rotunda of the U.S. Capitol. The medal, designed and struck by the United States Mint, is in recognition of these astronauts’ significant contributions to our Nation.

John Glenn became the first American to orbit the Earth on February 20, 1962, helping pave the way for the first lunar landing. As mission commander for *Apollo 11*, Neil Armstrong gained the distinction of being the first astronaut to land a spacecraft on the moon and the first to step on its surface on July 21, 1969. Buzz Aldrin joined Armstrong in piloting the lunar module, *Eagle*, to the surface of the moon and became the second person to walk on the lunar surface. Michael Collins piloted the command module, *Columbia*, in lunar orbit and helped his fellow Apollo 11 astronauts complete their mission on the moon.

The medal’s obverse (heads side) depicts the portraits of Apollo 11 astronauts Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin and Michael Collins facing left, and *Friendship 7* astronaut John Glenn facing right, representing the two historic missions. The design also features a partial view of the Earth from orbit, as well as a horizon line with an astronaut walking on the lunar surface facing the flag. The names of the four astronauts are inscribed along the outer rim. The obverse was designed by United States Mint Artistic Infusion Program Master Designer Joel Iskowitz and sculpted by United States Mint Sculptor–Engraver Phebe Hemphill.

The medal’s reverse (tails side) design features the Lunar Excursion Module orbiting the moon and the *Friendship 7* mission capsule orbiting the Earth with the inscription *WE CAME IN PEACE FOR ALL MANKIND*. The reverse was designed by Iskowitz and sculpted by United States Mint Sculptor–Engraver Don Everhart.

Public Law 111–44, which authorized the United States Mint to strike the New Frontier Congressional Gold Medal, also authorizes the bureau to strike and issue three-inch, and one and one-half-inch bronze reproductions of the medal. The bronze medals, priced at \$44.95 (three-inch) and \$7.95 (one and one-half-inch), will be available for purchase from the United States Mint at noon Eastern Time on November 16, 2011, at <http://www.usmint.gov/catalog> or 1–800–USA–MINT (872–6468). Hearing- and speech-impaired customers with TTY equipment may order at 1–888–321–MINT (6468).

The United States Mint, created by Congress in 1792, is the Nation’s sole manufacturer of legal tender coinage and is responsible for producing circulating coinage for the Nation to conduct its trade and commerce. The United States Mint also produces proof, uncirculated and commemorative coins; Congressional Gold Medals; and silver, gold and platinum bullion coins.

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